United Nations S/PV.4848

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4848th meeting

Friday, 24 October 2003, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Negroponte	(United States of America)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Atieh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-57838 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Afghanistan in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhādi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in absence of objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Guéhenno took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): When the Security Council was last briefed on the situation in Afghanistan some two months ago, the prevailing concern was the deteriorating security situation across large areas of the country.

The past few weeks are a reminder that, as the final and most important stages of the peace process move ahead, many of the fundamental and structural causes of insecurity remain unresolved. This was recently clearly demonstrated in the north, when on 9 October, after months of relative calm, the arrest of elements affiliated with Jamiat sparked factional tensions that flared into the worst fighting in the region since the signing of the Bonn Agreement.

Sporadic tribal and inter-factional conflicts also contribute to insecurity in the provinces of the south, southeast and east, but the primary source of insecurity remains the risk of terrorist attacks and continued and sizeable cross-border infiltration by suspected Taliban, Al Qaeda, and Hizb-I-Islami elements. With the exception of Badakhshan province, every border district — from Nimroz province in the southwest to Nuristan province in the northeast — was classified as high risk in the latest assessment of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) on 15 October. Indeed, in several border districts — Maruf in Kandahar and Barmal and Gayan in Paktika — the Taliban have been able to establish de facto control over district administration.

Attacks by terrorists against Government, military and humanitarian personnel are steadily increasing. Recent attacks against humanitarian organizations have primarily targeted national, rather than international, personnel. In the past six weeks, four national staff of the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR), a non-governmental organization (NGO), were murdered by Taliban in Ghazni on 8 September. According to the sole survivor, before being shot, the victims were informed that they were to be killed as punishment for working with NGOs. This incident was followed by the killing on 24 September of two staff members of the Voluntary Association for Rehabilitation of Afghanistan (VARA), an Afghan NGO, in Helmand province. And, on 27 September, in the same province, seven security guards from the Arghandab Valley Authority were killed in Lashkar Gah city when their vehicle was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade. These three incidents are only the most serious; elsewhere, mine-clearance teams and clearly marked NGO vehicles and offices have come under attack.

Caution must be exercised in attributing all significant incidents to Taliban forces, as there other, non-Taliban forces that also take advantage of instability, including narcotics traffickers. Yet, regardless of the identity or the origin of the

perpetrators, attacks against humanitarian workers seriously jeopardize the safety of personnel and limit the ability to effectively conduct reconstruction and to support political activities.

The trend towards targeting civilians who support the central Government and the peace process supports the view that the United Nations itself must also be seen as a target. As a result of increased terrorist activities, the United Nations and humanitarian community have taken further security precautions, particularly in the south. All United Nations missions are temporarily suspended in Nimroz, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces. In Kandahar, armed escorts are required in four districts, and the missions are suspended in the other five. Following the killings in Helmand province on 24 and 27 September, to which I have just referred, the majority of humanitarian organizations working in that part of the country have imposed a travel ban outside Kandahar city and its immediate environs. Those security precautions — particularly the suspension of operations — are considerably restricting reconstruction and the political process, including the ability of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to ensure effective monitoring of the registration of electors for the Constitutional Loya Jirga in the south of the country.

(spoke in English)

Despite serious challenges, the Afghan Government has made some progress in addressing the causes of insecurity. First among those steps, reform of the senior level of the Ministry of Defence has been completed. On 20 September, President Karzai announced the list of appointees to the twenty-two senior positions within the new organizational structure. The appointment of those individuals has gone some way towards better representation of the full ethnic and geographic diversity of Afghanistan, and should bring a level of professionalism and accountability to a State institution largely seen as above the law.

Credible reform of the Ministry of Defence has been regarded as a prerequisite for successfully disarming factional armies. Of concern are indications that the majority of Afghans — particularly among the Pashtun population in the south — believe the reform has kept real power in the hands of the Panjshiris. The new Ministry of Defence will have to quickly prove that it is pursuing a national policy, despite the continuity provided by Minister Fahim and the new Panjshiri chief of staff, Bismillah Khan, and that the newly appointed staff have effective responsibility and authority.

Although the reform was less sweeping than expected, it marked a step in the right direction to permit the pilot disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programme to proceed, starting today in Kunduz. The initiation of the DDR programme ahead of the election of the majority of Constitutional Loya Jirga delegates should help to alleviate concerns over the constitutional deliberations. The programme's success, meanwhile, should provide the best indication of whether reform of the Ministry of Defence went far enough to generate the public confidence necessary for undertaking the full DDR exercise, and it will be a primary determinant of the extent to which the population at large believes that the outcome of national political processes is based not on the rule of the gun, but on the popular will of the Afghan people. Further reforms are needed in national security ministries and all other government ministries — which remain influenced by factional and ethnic interests — so that they become the levers of the State instruments of a national system of government.

Allow me to briefly bring the Council up to date on the status of the constitutional reform and the electoral registration. In September, in consultation with the Secretariat of the Constitutional Commission, President Karzai postponed the Constitutional Loya Jirga until the end of Ramadan, between the end of November and early December. The revised schedule — which is still within the timetable set by Bonn — has provided the Commission more time for finalizing the draft constitution, which is now with the President.

Five hundred delegates will participate in the Constitutional Loya Jirga, of whom 344 will be elected on a provincial basis by the district representatives of the 2002 Emergency Loya Jirga, who make up the electorate that will vote for the elected Constitutional Loya Jirga delegates. The registration of that electorate began on 28 September in all provinces except Kunduz, where it began on 22 September, and in the eastern region, where it began on 1 October. To date, the registration process has been completed in some 20 provinces. It is estimated that nearly 76 per cent of the electorate has been registered in those areas. For the

2002 Emergency Loya Jirga, 25 districts did not elect representatives. Therefore, by-elections have been held to add those districts to the electorate. The by-elections, held so far in 24 out of the 25 districts — the exception was Daulat Yar, in Ghor province — have added approximately 1,000 voters to the electorate.

There has been some concern regarding registration in Logar, Samangan, Sari Pul and Ghor provinces, where higher than expected percentages of the electorate did not register. In some areas, that was due to problems with travel or to absence for work abroad, but elsewhere it was attributable to insecurity caused by factional fighting and to intimidation by local authorities and commanders. The Secretariat of the Constitutional Commission is considering ways to ensure that district representatives in those areas are given an opportunity to register at a later stage.

In order to minimize potential acts of intimidation and violence against candidates, actual election of delegates is scheduled to take place just ahead of the Loya Jirga, with the exception of Badakhshan, where the onset of winter has necessitated early elections. But that is not expected to jeopardize delegates, as the north-east region has not experienced any security incidents during the registration phase. The rules of procedure for the Constitutional Loya Jirga elections have been finalized and distributed to all regions along with the final seat allocation per province. National advisory committees for special-category elections — including women, refugees and internally displaced persons, nomads and Hindus and Sikhs — are being established to provide guidance and oversight on nomination and election procedures as well as to assist in public education regarding the electoral process.

The adoption of a new Afghan constitution by a Constitutional Loya Jirga will establish the legal foundation for re-establishing the rule of law and for ongoing reconstruction efforts. It will also determine the form of government and thus provide the basis for national elections.

The legal and institutional structures necessary for the national election are gradually being put in place. The registration decree, establishing the guidelines for who is eligible to vote, was finalized on 9 September and the political parties law, laying out the legal framework for the formation of political parties, was ratified on 12 October. The Ministry of Justice has received requests for registration from more than 100 parties. Although the final political parties law is an improvement on the original draft, it is less than perfect. In particular, there may be room for concern regarding parties' rights to assembly and free expression as well as the threshold for parties' being dissolved by the Government.

The timeline for deployment of the registration teams has been moved back from 15 October 2003, as originally envisioned, to 1 December. Deployment will begin in the eight regional centres. As soon as possible thereafter, registration will begin in 20 to 25 additional urban sites — preferably where there is a United Nations presence, and, obviously, subject to security assessments. That decision was taken because the current availability of funds was insufficient to implement the previous strategy of a broader start.

The establishment of the regional offices of the Interim Afghan Electoral Commission will be completed in the coming days. The immediate task facing the Commission is to begin hiring the 800 registrars needed so as to ensure that the full complement of trained registrars are ready for December.

The security project to support the registration is also moving ahead. Under the plan, police contingents of four officers — two national and two provincial — will receive special training prior to being assigned to accompany registration teams. In this regard, the recent topping up of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) by the European Union is a positive development.

The success of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the electoral registration exercise will be dependent upon sufficient improvement in security conditions to allow deployment of staff beyond major urban centres. Indeed, if it were held today, the electoral process would not succeed. Some 60 per cent of the south and some 20 per cent of the south-east and east are at any one time not freely accessible. As this corresponds to areas that are heavily populated by Pashtuns, the result would be disenfranchisement, which would be politically untenable.

The unanimous vote by the Security Council last week approving expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) beyond Kabul is a welcome and much-needed development. The new ISAF mandate clears the way for extending international

security assistance to where it is most needed throughout the country, and I would therefore encourage Member States to provide necessary and appropriate resources to do that. ISAF expansion should help to provide a secure environment for the implementation of the Bonn process and to extend the authority of the central Government into the provinces by creating space for new national security institutions, as well as for other nascent State institutions.

The decision by Germany to deploy a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to Kunduz is a welcome first step — one that will hopefully encourage other countries to consider how they can best contribute. However, the PRT concept provides only some, not all, of the possible benefits of a more robust ISAF expansion. In addition to the PRT concept, a more robust deployment of ISAF peacekeepers, short-term rapid reaction deployments and a presence on major highways — indeed, a mix of approaches for each region — could make major inroads in helping to resolve the security situation. Any initiative to improve the security environment in Afghanistan is welcome, provided that it supports the national agenda of furthering the Bonn process and of expanding Government authority in a coherent, commonly understood and coordinated manner.

The international community has also taken steps to improve the overall security situation in Afghanistan with available assets on the ground. A joint coordination cell has been established to improve coordination between the Afghan Government, the United Nations, NATO and the coalition in support of the Bonn process. The joint coordination cell should assist in coordinating security support and developing operational plans for parallel Bonn activities, particularly in insecure areas, as well as dealing with requests for coalition and ISAF assistance.

Afghans expect their Government to provide security and social services. Without either, confidence in the peace process and the transitional administration will fade, opening the door for Taliban and other anti-Government forces. Insecurity has, without question, slowed the delivery of reconstruction — if not outright prevented it in the most insecure areas. Where construction projects have gone ahead in spite of the dangers posed by Taliban and other insurgents, delays and protective measures for staff have inflated the projected costs of those projects. Too often, this cost has also been paid in human life.

Yet it is also true that when the international donors conference was held in Tokyo in 2002, the extent of Afghanistan's needs was not fully appreciated. At that time, estimates by the World Bank ran upwards of $10 billion. It is now clear that significantly greater resources are required if Afghanistan is to recover from the near total devastation of its infrastructure and social capital after years of war. Whereas in Tokyo donors pledged some $4.5 billion for reconstruction over five years, the Ministry of Finance now believes that $6 billion will be needed each year if its reconstruction needs are to be met.

The recent International Monetary Fund and World Bank meeting in Dubai provided an opportunity for donors to recommit to Afghanistan. The only pledges actually made, however, were the announcement by the United States of some $1.2 billion for Afghanistan, including $600 million for security and $400 million in support of reconstruction, and a commitment by the European Union of 50 million euros to the LOTFA. Ministers and senior representatives from 22 Member States further reaffirmed their commitment to Afghanistan at the high-level ad hoc meeting held on the margins of the General Assembly last month.

Over time, the proportion of funding supplied by domestic revenues and private investment will need to increase, as will the role of national institutions in providing services and protection for the Afghan citizenry. In the meantime, however, Afghanistan is still dependent on the continued support of the international community. Forward momentum across the parallel tracks of security, reconstruction and development and the Bonn political process must be maintained if the institutions of State are to take hold.

Over the long term, guaranteeing peace and stability in Afghanistan will require national unity. The creation of a multi-ethnic Government, bound by a new, broadly agreed constitution, is essential to this process, as only in that way will all Afghans be able to have confidence that the central Government is accountable to and serves the interests of its people.

In the short term, however, there are worrying signs that the political compact that has allowed the Government to press ahead with Bonn in spite of the differences among its individual members may be weakening. Over the past few weeks, the divisions

between those who would turn the corner on Afghanistan's past and those who would preserve their entitlement appear to have deepened. This was most clearly demonstrated by the several meetings held among the so-called jihadi leadership during President Karzai's absence for the General Assembly. Those divisions were later downplayed, but they nonetheless demonstrate that a balance must be struck between moving the peace process forward and ensuring that the major stakeholders remain willing participants.

As the Bonn process enters its final stage, the Afghan Government and the international community will embark upon their most challenging and far-reaching political undertakings. Afghans have many reasons to be optimistic that those undertakings will provide a solid foundation for a stable Afghanistan. However, there are still significant obstacles standing in the way, not least the lack of security. Maintaining the forward momentum that has been building in the months since Bonn will require the determination of the Afghan people and the will of the international community. The expansion of security assistance provides a critical element of this equation; its expected benefits must now be realized.

The President: I thank Mr. Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussions on this subject.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.